

In the Claims:

Please amend the Claims as follows and without prejudice. This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A method for facilitating secure communications among at least two parties over a communication network, comprising:

retaining a first private key and transmitting a corresponding first initial public key and synchronizing indicator;

using a received second public key and second synchronizing indicator in combination with said retained first private key to determine, and retain, a first encryption key;

determining a second private key, a third public key and a third synchronizing indicator, wherein said second private key is retained with said first retained private key;

encrypting at least said third synchronizing indicator using said first encryption key;

transmitting said third public key and encrypted third synchronizing indicator;

decrypting a received fourth synchronizing indicator using said first encryption key; and

determining a second encryption key from said second private key, a fourth public key and said decrypted fourth synchronizing indicator, wherein said second encryption key is retained with said first encryption key.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1 wherein said determining a next private key and a next information item set, encrypting at least one element of said next information item set, transmitting said encrypted next information element, decrypting said received encrypted information item element; and, determining a next encryption key from said next private key and said decrypted information item are repeated until a known number of encryption keys are determined.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of encrypting further comprises: selecting at least one of said retained encryption keys alternatively.

6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of encrypting further comprises: selecting a known encryption key.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 6 wherein said known encryption key is such that an output value is the same as an input value.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 5 wherein said encryption keys are selected in a known sequence.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8 wherein said known sequence corresponds to an order of retention of said encryption keys.

10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 8 wherein said known sequence corresponds to an order pre-selected by said parties.

Claims 11 - 28. (Cancelled)

Claim 29. (New) The method of Claim 1, wherein said synchronizing indicators correspond to select bit positions.